

**MAIDSTONE GREEN SPACES STRATEGY**

improving our parks  
and open spaces

**PARKS AND RECREATION GROUNDS**

**MANAGEMENT PLANS**

**MANGRAVET RECREATION GROUND**

**WARD: SOUTH**

**MP 0613**

**MARCH 2006**



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Management Plan for Mangravet Recreation Ground provides guidelines for the maintenance and the development of the site over the next three years. It outlines the adopted maintenance regime and describes the further improvements to the site which will be carried out as part of the process of implementing the Green Spaces Strategy.

Mangravet Recreation Ground is situated in the Mangravet area of Maidstone, in the South Ward, approximately three kilometres south of the town centre. It is situated on the edge of the Mangravet estate which has a high proportion of properties belonging to the Maidstone Housing Trust.

It lies on a flat piece of land and has a fairly regular, nearly rectangular shape.

The ground serves the local community.

The facilities consist of two ball games areas and a teenage shelter. There is also a small car park by the main entrance. The Ground used to contain a football pitch.

The Ground lies within the wedge of countryside separating Park Wood and Loose. A public footpath runs across its western boundary, leading south from the town towards Boughton Mount and Boughton Monchelsea.

## **2. RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

There are a number of Council strategy and policy documents which are relevant to Mangravet Recreation Ground:

- Green Spaces Strategy (2005)
- “Play for Today” Towards a Strategy for Outdoor Equipped Play Areas 2004-08 (2005)
- Sports and Play Facilities Strategy (2003)
- Maidstone Matters: Community Strategy for Maidstone Borough (2003)
- Best Value Review: A Clean and Tidy Borough (2002)
- The Local Cultural Strategy for Maidstone
- The Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Guidance (2005)

These documents recognise that public green open spaces are an important part of the environment in which we live. The quality and quantity of those open spaces have an effect on our quality of life. They are valuable and free resources for recreation and education. There is need in Maidstone to further improve the access, infrastructure, facilities and the biodiversity of public green spaces. The Green Spaces Strategy (2005) has set the way forward with a plan of improvements for years 2005-10.

### **3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE SITE**

#### **3.1 The overall vision for Mangravet Recreation Ground is:**

**“To create and maintain a recreation ground which provides opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation for local residents.”**

#### **3.2 The key objectives for the Ground are to:**

- Provide well-maintained sports and amenity facilities for local people.
- Ensure that the ground is clean and well-maintained.
- Ensure that it is safe to use at all times.
- Enhance the natural environment and the biodiversity value of the site.
- Develop and maintain links with the local community in order to consult on the management and maintenance of the Ground.

### **4. THE SITE AND ITS FACILITIES**

#### **4.1 Entrances and boundaries**

The shape of the site is approximately rectangular.

To the north the Ground borders Maidstone Cemetery and is separated from it by a high evergreen hedge.

The eastern boundary is marked by the line of garden fences belonging to the properties in Camp Way. Many of those fences are broken. The Council intends to erect a metal palisade fence along this boundary line to increase the security of the Recreation Ground and the residents.

To the south there is a drainage ditch and a line of Lombardy poplars, with an arable field beyond.

Along the western boundary there is another drainage ditch. On the other side of the ditch the public footpath runs between the two lines of trees and shrubs, and a secure metal fence separates the Recreation Ground from the neighbouring Oldborough Manor School.

The main vehicular and pedestrian access onto the ground is in the north-east corner. It is through a wide lockable metal gate and along the access drive to the car park. The gate is badly damaged and should be repaired or replaced.

Three more pedestrian accesses are located one in each remaining corner of the ground, and another one in the school fence.

## **4.2 Roads, paths, cycleways and parking**

Unmade Public Footpath runs along the western boundary. Tarmac path runs along the northern boundary between the main entrance and the entrance into the adjoining school ground.

Parking is in the car park by the ball games areas. The car park is separated from the recreational area by a substantial metal railing, damaged in places, with the gate missing. The railing should be repaired and the gate reinstated.

## **4.3 Lighting**

There are some lighting columns on the site, many are visibly damaged.

## **4.4 Grass areas**

Most of the site consists of amenity grass. Wider strips of longer vegetation (mainly grass) are left along the two ditches and the accompanying banks.

## **4.5 Trees and other vegetation**

Two mature English oaks grow near the main entrance and one by the line of back gardens. There is a line of mixed trees and shrubs along the boundary with the school. Some of those are conifers growing in a row with several gaps. A covenant requires that the Council must replace any conifers that die in that row.

The row of poplars is an old orchard windbreak; these appear to belong to the arable field which used to be an orchard until recently.

## **4.6 Biodiversity**

The site currently has fairly low value with regards to biodiversity.

Apart from the three specimen oak trees, the site's biodiversity is concentrated along its southern and western boundaries. It takes the form of trees (poplar, hawthorn, conifers), scrub and long grass. This creates a mixture of habitats. These lines of vegetation connect to a network of old hedgerows and windbreaks in the countryside south of the site.

There is space to make both lines wider by planting more trees and retaining a wider strip of long grass, leaving grass paths that would follow the existing desire lines.

## **4.7 Provision of seats and bins**

Apart from a damaged teen shelter, there are currently no seats on the site.

There are some (damaged) litter bins and dog litter bins.

#### **4.8 Signage**

There are no signs on the site. An information board should be installed giving the Council contact details and bylaws.

#### **4.9 Provision of recreational facilities**

There are two ball games courts and a damaged teen shelter. Any improvements to the recreational facilities will be consulted with the local community and provided as a part of a package of measures aimed at improving the whole area. This is an ongoing process.

### **5. MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

Mangravel Recreation Ground is owned and managed by Maidstone Borough Council. The day-to-day maintenance is undertaken by the grounds contractor Glendale.

#### **5.1 Cleanliness**

Litter bins are emptied weekly and during the grass-cutting season litter is collected from the site prior to each cut.

Dog litter bins are emptied twice each week.

#### **5.2 Safety and security**

The site is quite secluded but a degree of surveillance is provided by the adjoining properties.

Visitors can report problems:

- general – to MBC parks hotline on 01622 602747
- anti-social behaviour – to the park's staff or to Community Safety Officer on 01622 602598
- any crime should be reported to the police.

#### **5.3 Infrastructure maintenance**

The ball courts and the teenage shelter are inspected by the grounds contractor and any damage is made safe and rectified at the earliest opportunity.

#### **5.4 Horticultural management regimes**

From the beginning of March and the end of October the grass is cut 15 times.

### **6. PLANNED FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS**

Following site audits and a public consultation in summer 2005, a list of improvements has been drawn up. Most of this work will be carried out by a specialist landscape contractor between autumn 2006 and spring 2008. This is part of the Green Spaces Strategy work aimed at enhancing the quality of public green spaces.

The following projects are planned:

- Install metal fencing along the backs of properties in Camp Way.
- Repair or replace the main gate and the gate in the car park railing.
- Fit bollards in the pedestrian entrances.
- Install information signs.
- Plant trees of native species in selected locations.

## **7. FUNDING**

There are a number of sources of funding, both internal and external, for further improvements to the facilities and the maintenance regimes, which can be considered for this site.

Green Spaces Strategy – improvements to the value of £500,000 are being implemented in Maidstone's main green open spaces during 2005-2008.

Planning obligations – Section 106 agreements on new residential developments can generate funds to improve existing public green spaces directly related to those developments.

Big Lottery Breathing Spaces Programme – starting in summer 2006, aimed at community groups involved in creating and maintaining wildlife-friendly green spaces in their local area. Grants of £300-10,000 available to voluntary groups and to parish/town councils.

Awards for All – give grants towards projects aimed at improving quality of life of local communities. Grants of £500-5,000 are available to community groups, parish/town councils, schools and health bodies.

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (Environment Programme) – promotes environmental improvements which balance the needs of people and wildlife, especially those aiming to conserve 'hard-to-fund', or lower profile, UK native species and habitats under demonstrable threat of loss or decline in urban, rural or marine areas.

Safer and Stronger Communities government funding stream – is aimed at tackling crime and anti-social behaviour through improving the condition of streets and other public spaces.

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme – for projects within 10 miles of a landfill or extraction site, aimed at provision and maintenance of public amenities. Grants £250- 25,000.

## 9. RESULTS OF QUALITY AUDITS

Quality audits are carried out in parks and open spaces at regular intervals. Various attributes of each site are given points between 1 and 5, where 5 is the maximum score.

<b>MANGRAVET RECREATION GROUND</b>					
<b>ATTRIBUTE</b>	<b>AUDIT DATE AND SCORE</b>				
	Mid 2004	November 2004	2008	2010	
Main entrance	2	2			
Boundaries including hedges, gates etc	4	4			
Roads, paths, cycleways and access points	4	1			
Parking	4	2			
Availability of public transport	-	-			
Lighting	4	5			
Cleanliness	2	1			
Planted areas (trees, shrubs, floral displays)	1	1			
Grass areas	2	2			
Litter and dog litter bins	-	1			
Seats	-	1			
Toilets	-	none			
Health and safety		1			
Nature conservation value		3			
Access for disabled		-			
Information	-	-			
Sustainability		-			